



The Ombudsman | Ontario
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Eleanor Meslin, LL.B.
Temporary Ombudsman
Ombudsman intérimaire

July 28, 1989

125 Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2C7
(416) 586-3300

Mr. Chris Brown
6267 Castille Court
Gloucester, Ontario
K1C 1X4

Dear Mr. Brown:

Re: Our File No. 47790

Thank you for your letter of July 5, 1989.

I have reviewed the Complaint Summary which you signed on September 8, 1988 as well as the memorandum completed by Mr. Bylsma following your interview with him on September 8, 1988 and Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter to you dated October 11, 1988. I have also asked my Director of Investigations to speak with Mr. Bylsma and Mr. Fitzpatrick regarding your comment that they both agreed that our letter of October 11, 1988 did not reflect the concern you were expressing in your signed statement.

I note that the statement signed by you on September 8, 1988 reads as follows:

Complainant disagrees with approach of Minister of Health regarding environmental hypersensitivity. Complainant disagrees that there are two sides to the issue, given that government reports identify the problem as real. Complainant claims that past statements of Ministry officials to the effect that the environmentally sensitive may be imagining their problems due to psychological stress have devastated the lives of many people affected by low levels of environmental pollution and requests appropriate compensation for them. Because misconceptions still remain, complainant claims the Ministry should engage in public education campaign re health professionals and within the Ministry to make them aware that the previous statements of officials were wrong.

In Mr. Bylsma's record of his meeting with you on September 8, 1988 he noted that he spent a period of 2 1/2 hours with you discussing

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your concerns. In this memorandum, Mr. Bylsma reiterated that you wished to complain about the lack of recognition on the part of the Minister of Health of the problems of the environmentally sensitive. Mr. Bylsma noted that you made reference to Mr. George Thomson's report which made a series of recommendations to the provincial government on how the problems of the environmentally sensitive may be addressed. You stated that none of these recommendations have ever been implemented. You also referred to the fact that the Thomson report was referred to Dr. Zimmerman and a committee under his charge. This committee eventually supported the essential position of the Thomson report but you indicated your dissatisfaction that none of these recommendations have ever been put into effect. Mr. Bylsma noted your statement that doctors and health professionals still consider that people who claim they have serious environmental sensitivity, are experiencing psychosomatic problems and other psychological problems. For example, you referred to Dr. Corber, the Head of the Ottawa-Carleton Health Unit.

Mr. Bylsma also noted your statements that OHIP does not normally pay for specialized treatment for this disorder and that OHIP has only paid for such treatments in the United States in certain rare situations which had become highly publicized in the media. Mr. Bylsma noted your association with the Human Ecology Foundation which represents 10,000 to 15,000 people who have this condition.

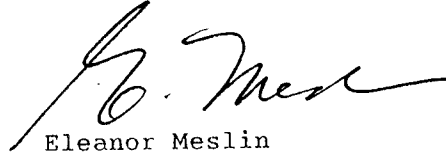
Finally, Mr. Bylsma noted that once again your primary concern is that the Ministry of Health recognize officially that the problem exists. He noted that your secondary and more long term concern is with regard to the question of compensation for people who have had their lives ruined by this problem.

I have also carefully reviewed Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter to you dated October 11, 1988. In it, he divided your concerns into five areas. Each of these points is referred to either in your signed statement or Mr. Bylsma's Interview Summary. While Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter is perhaps more specific under category b) and e) than the interview documentation indicates, I would like to assure you that there was no intention on our part to misconstrue your concerns by addressing these issues as fully as the others. In general however, it would appear to me that the information provided to you by Mr. Fitzpatrick is accurate and applies to the issues which you have raised. Finally, I have asked for clarification from both Mr. Bylsma and Mr. Fitzpatrick concerning your statement that they agreed that the letter sent to you on October 11, 1988 did not reflect the concern expressed in your signed statement. Both members of my staff have stated unequivocally that they did not indicate to you any such agreement.

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As Mrs. Van Kleef suggested in her letter of October 20, 1988,
if you wish to provide us with a written complaint which more clearly and
accurately sets out your concerns, we would be pleased to review it.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Meslin", written in a cursive style.

Eleanor Meslin
Temporary Ombudsman

/bb

1-800-263-1830